

DAM REVIEW COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 24, 2006

PRESENT: Mehigh, Sanderson, Sarrazin, Sawyer, Williams.

ABSENT: Burwell, Crawford (excused), Lulham

GUESTS: Merilee Lawson, City Assessor, Cheryll Warren, The Argus Press; Mr. and Mrs. Dean Welty; Linda Milito; John Lester.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mehigh at 7:10 p.m. in the Corunna/Caledonia Fire Department training room

NEW BUSINESS: Sawyer stated that the reason for this meeting was to inform the committee on what has been happening with the dam. The committee also needs to form a recommendation to council as to what they would like to see happen to the dam. Sawyer went over the history of the dam and its inspections. The state has it listed a high hazard dam, although reasons for this are unclear. The city is required by the state to have the dam inspected every three years and we must have state permits if we do anything with the dam.

Right now, there are no grants available to fix or tear down the dam. Sawyer stated that there is some indication that state money might become available to make dams into rapids in the future. Chesaning is considering something like this, which would convert their eleven-foot dam down to a two-foot fish ladder. However, by doing this, they will lose their reservoir. Based on surveys, Sawyer feels residents want to keep the dam, but they do not want to pay more taxes.

The Spicer Group was contacted, in 2002, because of their work on the Misteguay Dam. They used a roller concrete process, which costs considerably less than other repair plans. The two plans developed to repair the our dam, using a stair-stepped construction, would cost approximately \$648,000 and \$821,000. The existing structure would not have to be completely removed. The new dam would be in front of the old structure.

The Spicer Group did the last inspection of the dam in December of 2005. After the 2006 spring thaw, the dam formed new cracks and the west bank shifted. The deterioration of this bank has formed sinkholes and is threatening the house closest to the dam. If the bank collapses, continued erosion could threaten N. Shiawassee Street.

Spicer Group was asked to develop a plan to permanently fix the west bank and stop gate. They came up with two plans costing between \$300,000-\$400,000 each. This cost was significantly higher than expected. Recently, Spicer Group came up with a plan to fix the flow channel walls on a temporary basis. This plan would use a steel crib in the flow channel to keep the walls from collapsing. This is not part of an overall solution, just something to give the city more time to figure out a permanent fix. This project is projected to cost \$20,000-\$30,000.

Lester asked what could be done to raise money for repairs. It seemed to him that people want to keep the dam and felt that, with lobbying and information, we might be able to raise up to \$500,000 in donations.

Sawyer stated that he went to council recently with updated cost numbers. He also gave them a cost analysis of all city projects that need to be done and revenue sources. Currently, the five mills that fund the City Improvement Fund cannot be used for the dam. This five mills has ten years left on it. In that ten years, it will generate about 1-1.5 million in revenue. This must be used for streets, water and sewer projects. Mehigh asked if we could go back to the residents and ask for a language change so that the money could be used for the dam. Sawyer stated that one idea is to have the language changed for the remaining ten years of the millage and ask for a ten-year extension of the five mills. This would give us a 20-year plan to spread out the cost of repairs without asking for any more mills. It would also give us money to use on the other city infrastructure repairs. Sarrazin asked what this millage extension would generate in additional funds. Sawyer estimated that \$6-8 million was possible.

Sawyer said that he would recommend a 20-year program for the dam project. The state is not demanding that we do anything with the dam, right now, and it seems that they cannot force us to do anything. Sawyer felt that the roller compacting was the best plan for the dam repair. Additions to the cost will be enhancements to the dam, like lighting, a boat launch, and dredging. It is possible that donations or even grants could be arranged for some of the enhancements.

Sawyer stated that the committee's charge is to make a recommendation to council on construction technique and financing. A complete plan is not needed now. But, if there needs to be a proposal to extend the five mills, the best time to do this would be on the spring ballot. If that goes through, then the committee will have to look at enhancement costs, fund raising, and additional plans. Lester asked if volunteers could work on some of the enhancements. Sawyer thought that might be possible without state permits.

Sawyer proposed that he bring the financial figures he presented to council to the next meeting and add ten years to the model. Lawson suggested that the third meeting could be for engineering presentations and the fourth meeting to figure financing and form a recommendation to council. Sawyer stated that temporary repairs to the flow channel will start as soon as the costs are received.

Lester suggested that, if this idea is brought up for a vote, a pro-dam campaign needs to be organized to tell people about the plans for the dam. Lawson suggested that we let people know about all of the projects that will benefit from the additional money generated by the ten-year continuation of the five mills.

The next meeting will be on November 7, at 7 p.m. in the training room, if it is available. The third meeting will be November 21 with engineering presentations. The fourth meeting will be held in December.

Meeting adjourned by Mehigh at 8:40 p.m.

Don Mehigh, Chairperson